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RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC//DDI/OEA//
RHHMUNA/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI//FPA//
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC//DB-Z//
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 0770
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 7264
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 7336
RUEHGH/AMCONSUL SHANGHAI 1763
RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG 5605
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI 4531
RUEHGP/AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE 7746
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SUBJECT: SEOUL - PRESS BULLETIN; FEBRUARY 9, 2010

TOP HEADLINES

Chosun Ilbo

Four Opposition Parties Seek to Oust Prime Minister;
A Third of Pro-Park Geun-hye Lawmakers in Ruling GNP "Sympathize"
with the Move

JoongAng Ilbo

U.S. Asks President Lee to Help U.S. Troops to Use Uzbek Airport for
Operations in Afghanistan

Dong-a Ilbo

Minor Opposition Democratic Labor Party Secretary-General Faces
Arrest for Destruction of Evidence

Hankook Ilbo

10 Major College Admissions Officers Say ROK's Admissions Officer
System Falls Short of Expectations

Hankyoreh Shinmun, Segye Ilbo, Seoul Shinmun

MBC President Resigns in Protest over State-run Foundation for
Broadcast Culture's Unilateral Appointment of Board Members

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

According to a key Blue House official, early last year, the U.S.,
through high-level channels, asked President Lee Myung-bak to help
the U.S. military with its request to use Navoi Airport in
Uzbekistan as its new air supply route into Afghanistan, and
President Lee plans to convey this U.S. request to Uzbek President
Islam Karimov during their Feb. 11 summit. President Lee has a close
friendship with the Uzbek president. (JoongAng)

Two key North Korean security agencies yesterday threatened a
"sacred war of retaliation" against the ROK for "anti-republic
attempts to topple" the North Korean regime. The threat came on the
same day that the two Koreas discussed resuming suspended tours to
Mt. Kumgang and Kaesong, north of the border. (All)

The two Koreas, meanwhile, failed to narrow their differences over
the resumption of cross-border tours; the ROK reiterated its

conditions for restarting the tours which the North claimed were already met. (All)

According to an opinion survey by Gallup Korea commissioned by the Korea National Defense University, ROK citizens believe that the ROK-U.S. alliance has become significantly stronger under the Lee Myung-bak Administration. 50 percent of respondents said that the current ROK-U.S. alliance is strong. In 2007, the final year of the Roh Moo-hyun Administration, the figure was a mere 19 percent. (Chosun, JoongAng)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

According to North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency, Wang Jiarui, head of the Chinese Communist Party's International Department, met in Pyongyang yesterday with North Korean leader Kim Jong-il and conveyed a "verbal personal message" from Chinese President Hu Jintao. (JoongAng, Hankyoreh, Segye, all TVs, Pressian, VoiceofPeople)

MEDIA ANALYSIS

-N. Korea

Citing North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA),

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most ROK media reported that Wang Jiarui, head of the Chinese Communist Party's International Department, met in Pyongyang yesterday with North Korean leader Kim Jong-il and conveyed a "verbal personal message" from Chinese President Hu Jintao. According to media reports, the KCNA did not report the contents of the meeting, but it may have included a call on North Korea to return to the stalled Six-Party Talks and an invitation for Kim to visit China.

In a related development, moderate Hankook Ilbo's sub-heading read: "N. Korea Likely to Sidestep Six-Party Talks Issue and to Ask for Economic Aid and China's Mediation in Talks with U.S."

-U.S.-China Relations

Moderate Seoul Shinmun carried a front-page analysis entitled "Is U.S.-China Trade Friction Escalating into All-out Trade War?" It said: "It is feared that the trade friction between the two countries may throw cold water on a global economy which is barely on track to recovery.... A senior researcher at the Samsung Economic Research Institute said that the current situation stemmed from China's refusal to accept U.S. demands to correct its unfair trade and to appreciate its currency. He went on to say: 'The two countries are not likely to easily budge from their positions. The arrow has left the bow.'"

-U.S. Operations in Afghanistan

Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo gave front-page play to a report quoting a key Blue House official as saying that early last year, the U.S., through high-level channels, asked President Lee Myung-bak to help the U.S. military with its request to use Navoi Airport in Uzbekistan as its new air supply route into Afghanistan and that President Lee plans to convey this U.S. request to Uzbek President Islam Karimov during their Feb. 11 summit. The report, while noting President Lee's close friendship with the Uzbek president, observed that it is out of the ordinary in international diplomacy for countries to discuss a third party's issue of concern during their summit.

FEATURES

1S. KOREANS BELIEVE ALLIANCE WITH U.S. HAS GROWN STRONGER

(Chosun Ilbo, February 9, Page 6)

By Military affairs reporter Yu yong-won

South Koreans believe that the Seoul-Washington alliance has become significantly stronger since the inauguration of the Lee Myung-bak Administration, polls suggest.

In the latest poll of 1,261 adults including 60 experts conducted by Gallup Korea from Sept. 9 to Oct. 16 last year for the Korea National Defense University, 49.9 percent of respondents said the Seoul-Washington alliance was strong. This was a rise from 34.3 percent compared to a similar poll in 2008, the first year of Lee's presidency. By contrast, in 2007, the final year of the Roh Moo-hyun presidency, the figure was a mere 19.3 percent.

In 2007, 40.8 percent of respondents said the alliance was "awkward," but the ratio dropped to 19.5 percent in 2008 and 12.2 percent in 2009.

A majority of respondents consider the U.S. the most important foreign country to the ROK's national security. The percentage rose from 72.3 percent in 2007 to 85.9 percent in 2009.

In multiple answers to a question about factors threatening national security, 49.7 percent in the latest poll cited the military threat from North Korea, followed by 47.2 percent for regime instability in the North and 28.1 percent for global recession or economic friction.

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(This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is identical to the Korean version.)

U.S. ASKS PRESIDENT LEE TO HELP U.S. TROOPS TO USE UZBEK AIRPORT FOR OPERATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN
(JoongAng Ilbo, February 9, 2010, Front Page)

By Reporter Suh Seung-wook

President Lee Myung-bak plans to deliver a U.S. request on its behalf to Uzbek President Islam Karimov during their February 11 summit.

A key Blue House official said on February 8, "As a non-official agenda item of the ROK-Uzbek summit, President Lee will deliver to Uzbek President Karimov the U.S. military's request to use Navoi Airport in Uzbekistan as its air supply route into Afghanistan." It is out of the ordinary in international diplomacy for countries to discuss a third party's issue of concern during their bilateral summit.

The Blue House official explained, "Early last year, the U.S. made the request through high-level channels," adding, "During his visit to Uzbekistan last May, President Lee was not able to bring up that matter, which was pushed aside by other pending issues, and so he plans to raise it this time."

The U.S., which is waging a war in Afghanistan, is currently using the U.S. air base in Kyrgyzstan as its supply route. However, Kyrgyzstan, pressured by Russia, announced it will shut down the U.S. air base. Now the U.S. wants to secure Uzbekistan as an alternative supply route because it is considered an important staging post for U.S. troops in Afghanistan.

The problem is that the U.S. and Uzbekistan are not in good terms. Uzbekistan had maintained close relations with the U.S., which used its air base (for Afghan operations) in 2001. But Uzbekistan began to distance itself from the U.S. in 2005 when the U.S. criticized the country for its brutal crackdown on protests there.

President Lee and Uzbek President Karimov have developed close relations. President Karimov, who first met President Lee as Seoul

city mayor in 2006, attended his presidential inauguration, and sent him fruit as a gift three times the same year. In May last year, when the ROK President visited Uzbekistan, President Karimov accompanied him wherever he went, leading some people to call (Karimov's style) "stalking diplomacy."

ROKG officials said that this issue (regarding the U.S.'s desire to use Uzbekistan as a supply route into Afghanistan) will not be easily solved even at the request of President Lee, adding that, however, it will be hard for President Karimov to ignore a request from an ally.

STEPHENS